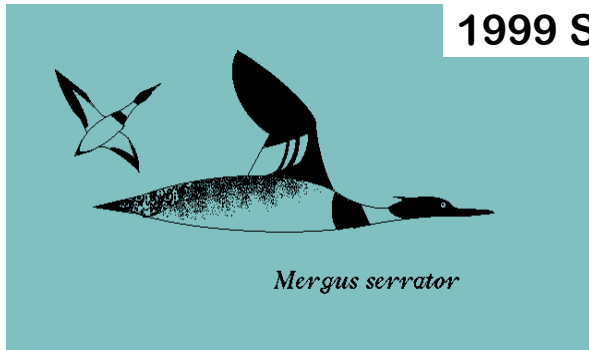


# Cape Cod Lake & Pond Waterfowl Survey

## 1999 Summary



The 17th annual Cape Cod Lake and Pond Waterfowl Survey was conducted on the weekend of December 4-5, 1999. The weather preceding the count was again very mild, and ice-free conditions prevailed during the survey.

A record 60 observers, 11 more than ever before (!), censused 374 ponds, just six ponds less than the record number. Curiously, only 23 species of waterfowl were found, the poorest variety in the survey's history. However, the total of 12,423 individuals, although more than a thousand birds less than last year's record high, was still the third highest in the count history.

### SPECIES RESULTS

Five species were found in record high numbers, with two additional species achieving their second highest totals in fifteen years. On the other hand, two species were in record low numbers.

**Common Loon** was missed for the first time in the history of the survey. However, this species has never been recorded in numbers, averaging only eight individuals annually, so their absence this year seems more a curiosity than a matter of any significance.

**Mute Swans** continued their recent

rebound, this year's 255 birds just six shy of the 15-year record, and 44% above average.

**Canada Goose** numbers have been all over the board lately. Survey totals plunged to a record low in 1996, then rebounded over the past two years, only to plunge again this year. The total of 474 birds is the second lowest ever, 51% below the 15-year average.

**Green-winged Teal** went through the roof this year, thanks to an amazing concentration of over 200 birds at the old fish hatchery in Sandwich. The total of 298 birds is almost four times last year's record and a whopping 730% above average.

**Mallards** established a new high with 2228 birds, 40% above the 15-year average. They were found on 187 ponds, far more than any other species.

**American Wigeon** also set a new record with 253 birds, 180% above average.

**Canvasbacks** continued their sad decline, establishing a record low of just 57 birds, 89% below average. This handsome duck was found on only four ponds this year.

**Ring-necked Ducks** were again numerous, with 362 birds comprising their second highest total ever, 76% above average.

**Scaup** (both species combined) established a new low, with just 1421 birds, 46% below average.

**Buffleheads** totaled 2279 birds, the third highest ever, 31% above average. They were found at 135 sites, once again making them the second most widespread species on the survey.

**Hooded Mergansers** continued their steady rise, establishing yet another record with 1037 birds, the first time they have cracked the thousand mark. This represents a 102% increase over the survey average. They were also found on 104 ponds, making them the fifth most widespread species. In 16 years, this lovely duck has gone from the tenth most common species on the survey to the fourth, with their numbers increasing by an order of magnitude!

**Ruddy Duck** numbers went through the roof, 444 birds shattering last year's record high. This is almost 10 times the 15-year average. They were also found at 17 sites, compared with just six sites last year.

**American Coot** numbers dropped from last year's record high, but at 340 birds were still well above average (+145%).

Bufflehead (2279 birds) outnumbered all other species, closely followed by Mallard (2228), Black Duck (1929), and scaup (both species combined, 1421 birds). These five species combined comprised about 63% of the overall total.

~~In terms of unusual species, 1999 was the~~ most uneventful year in the survey's history. Two Eurasian Wigeon in Chatham, and a White-winged Scoter in Barnstable were the only species of even modest note.

## TOWN RESULTS

As always, Falmouth out-distanced all other towns by a wide margin, with 3247 birds or 26% of the Capewide total. Barnstable was runner-up with 2165 birds (17%), followed distantly by Yarmouth's 1399 birds (11%). The best variety was found in Barnstable (21

species), Yarmouth (19 species), and Falmouth (18 species). Truro outdueled Wellfleet for the bottom of the heap with just 75 birds of eight species.

## POND RESULTS

An average of 33 birds/pond were seen. However, 86 (23%) ponds had no birds at all. Salt Pond in Falmouth traditionally harbors a large flock of scaup and consequently takes top honors every year for the largest number of birds: This year 1243 individuals of 7 species included 975 scaup. Second this year was Great Pond in Eastham with 390 birds, followed by Hinckley's Pond in Harwich with 350 birds (less than half of last year's total there). The best variety was again on Hinckley's Pond, where 12 species were found, followed by Pilgrim Lake in Orleans and Tom Matthew's Pond in Yarmouth with 11 species each.

## PARTICIPATION

Participation reached new heights: at least 60 people took part. Thanks to each and every one

### *Participants*

*Ron Ayotte, Courtney Armentraut, Mary Beers, Axel & C.J. Berg, Carl Bergfors, Keith Brunell, Frank Caruso, Kathleen Casey, Sally Clifton, Dick Comeau, Ruth Connaughton, F. Durr, Don Dyer, Helen & Bob Elias, Green Brier Nature Center "Conservation Action Teens", Sue & Ned Handy, Arnold Henson, Ron Hindman, Seward Highley, Mark Kasprzyk, Phil Kyle, Joyce Leary, Monica Lindo, Joann McGuire, George Martin, Kathy & Rives McGinley, Paul McHugh, Stauffer Miller, Priscilla Moor, Blair Nikula, Tom Noonan, Dennis Oliver, Stephanie & Aaron Orciuch, Alida Pellegrini-Toole, Bob Prescott, John Redfern, Diane Reynolds, Alison Robb, Don Scott, Kip Sherman, Janet & Arky Silverio, Dick Stacy, Barbara Stanton, Betsy Stepney, Polly Stevens, Bill Swift, Jim Talin, Aurele Thomas, J.Toole, Peter Trimble, Jean Turnbull, Mark Tuttle, Bob Vander Pyl, Dennis Wiehe, and Ellie Winslow.*

# 1999 Cape Cod Lake and Pond Waterfowl Survey

Species:	Town:															TOTAL	% OF TOTAL	# OF PONDS
	BOUR	FALM	SAND	MASH	BARN	YARM	DENN	BREW	HARW	CHAT	ORLE	EAST	WELL	TRUR	PROV			
Pied-billed Grebe	1	20	3	16	16	6	0	14	17	2	5	4	2	2	0	108	0.9	42
Mute Swan	4	89	13	16	19	89	5	0	6	5	9	0	0	0	0	255	2.1	41
Canada Goose	0	140	9	0	137	25	127	5	6	2	12	0	0	11	0	474	3.8	39
Wood Duck	2	1	0	0	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	11	0.1	4
Green-winged Teal	0	12	210	0	36	13	0	0	14	0	7	6	0	0	0	298	2.4	19
Black Duck	24	189	87	34	420	145	27	36	66	138	361	152	14	19	217	1929	15.5	131
Mallard	19	396	145	82	552	386	65	54	156	92	141	112	12	2	14	2228	17.9	187
Northern Pintail	1	0	0	0	8	3	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	1	16	0.1	6
Gadwall	0	2	8	0	45	44	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	101	0.8	12
Eurasian Wigeon	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2
American Wigeon	14	14	11	0	124	9	0	0	0	25	30	26	0	0	0	253	2	19
Canvasback	0	4	0	0	0	12	0	7	34	0	0	0	0	0	0	57	0.5	4
Ring-necked Duck	12	23	25	0	125	4	0	88	4	3	15	4	59	0	0	362	2.9	26
Greater Scaup	0	989	0	0	58	0	0	0	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	1053	8.5	4
Lesser Scaup	0	0	0	0	6	5	0	14	17	0	7	0	0	0	0	49	0.4	8
scaup species	0	51	0	0	7	5	9	80	158	0	0	1	1	7	0	319	2.6	13
White-winged Scoter	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Common Goldeneye	0	30	14	53	8	20	0	11	76	0	1	6	0	2	0	221	1.8	21
Bufflehead	12	518	67	550	352	364	44	68	150	60	43	34	5	2	10	2279	18.3	135
Hooded Merganser	47	348	51	25	154	85	0	28	22	47	44	180	6	0	0	1037	8.3	104
Common Merganser	0	0	31	1	15	7	0	25	137	0	0	0	0	30	0	246	2	13
Red-breasted Merganser	0	243	0	3	0	52	42	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	340	2.7	16
Ruddy Duck	0	79	0	0	27	64	0	22	5	0	123	124	0	0	0	444	3.6	17
American Coot	0	99	0	92	45	1	0	0	10	2	12	73	6	0	0	340	2.7	21
<b>TOTAL NUMBER</b>	<b>136</b>	<b>3247</b>	<b>674</b>	<b>872</b>	<b>2165</b>	<b>1339</b>	<b>321</b>	<b>452</b>	<b>884</b>	<b>376</b>	<b>810</b>	<b>724</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>242</b>	<b>12423</b>		374
% of Total	1	26	5	7	17	11	3	4	7	3	7	6	1	1	2			
Number of Species	10	18	13	10	21	19	8	12	16	10	14	13	9	8	4	23		
Number of Ponds Censused	12	60	17	15	59	27	17	28	26	29	27	11	22	17	8	375		
Birds per Pond	11	54	40	58	37	50	19	16	34	13	30	66	5	4	30	33		
Number of Observers	3	18	4	6	7	6	2	2	8	3	5	2	2	2	1	60		